

April 2008

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

Mean temperatures close to average across the whole of the UK. England, Wales and the UK all had their coldest April since 2001. Rainfall generally above average, and well above average across parts of eastern Scotland and north-east England. However, rainfall was actually below average most of Northern Ireland. Sunshine generally above average, but below average across parts of northern England and southern Scotland.

Hull (Kingston upon Hull) recorded a maximum temperature of 23.0 °C on 26th. Warcop Range (Cumbria) recorded a minimum temperature of -6.0 °C on 6th. 49.4 mm of rainfall was recorded at Glendessary (Inverness-shire) on 25th. During the 6th an area of sleet and snow moved across much of the Midlands and south-east England with 5 to 10 cm reported fairly widely, causing Heathrow airport to close for a time. A wind gust of 67 mph was recorded at Orlock Head (County Down) on 1st.

England diary of highlights

Mean temperatures close to average, but the coldest April since 2001. Rainfall around double the average, across parts of NE England.

1st to 4th: The month began with low pressure bringing rain or showers but high pressure soon settled things down with some fairly warm conditions on the 3rd and 4th, with temperatures reaching 19.0 °C at Huntsham (Devon) on the 3rd and 19.2 °C at Eynsford (Kent) on the 4th.

5th to 16th: During the 5th, a cold front cleared southwards introducing much colder conditions to all parts. Northerly winds brought temperatures down and also some increasingly wintry showers. During the 6th an area of sleet and snow moved across much of the Midlands and SE England with 5 to 10 cm reported fairly widely, causing Heathrow airport to close for a time. The maximum temperature at Kenley (Surrey) was only 2.0 °C. In the rest of this period, it remained rather cool and showery, with some heavy downpours at times, though the wintry precipitation became more and more confined to the higher ground of the north. Frosts were fairly widespread by night, with Warcop (Cumbria) recording a temperature of -6.0 °C on the 6th.

17th to 23rd: As high pressure became established to the north, an easterly flow developed, with occasional rain and showers, some of which were heavy. Temperatures were generally around or a little below average, though towards the end of this period, as the easterly wind dropped out, it became warmer with 18.9 °C at Middle Wallop (Hampshire) on the 22nd.

24th to 30th: The westerly winds returned for the end of the month bringing spells of rain, followed by showers, some of which again were heavy, thundery and contained some hail. Thorney Island (Sussex) recorded 28.4 mm of rain on the 29th as a band of heavy rain moved northwards. On the 26th, temperatures of over 21 °C were recorded over some eastern areas, with Hull (Kingston upon Hull) recording a temperature of 23.0 °C.

Wales diary of highlights

Mean temperatures close to average, but the coldest April since 2001.

1st to 5th: A rather unsettled start to the month with occasional showers and fresh westerly winds on the 1st. High pressure built from the south-west during the 2nd and 3rd, bringing warmer and mostly dry conditions to inland areas. Low cloud and mist plagued some coastal regions with fog patches also forming inland at night. Velindre (Powys) recorded a temperature of 19.7 °C on the 3rd. A cold front moved south during the night of the 4th introducing a colder northerly flow on the 5th, with showers turning increasingly wintry.

6th to 16th: Cold and wintry at first with a period of snow over northern parts early on the 6th and with a slow moving line of snow showers along western coasts. It gradually became less cold from the 8th but stayed unsettled through the rest of this period with low pressure close to the British Isles, giving showers or longer spells of rain over Wales. Some clear nights also with local frost, with St Clears (Carmarthenshire) recording a temperature of -3.9 °C on the 8th.

17th to 22nd: High pressure developed to the north of the British Isles early in this period with generally low pressure over northern France, maintaining a cool easterly breeze over Wales with showers or longer spells of rain, mostly confined to southern areas. Pressure built again later with more settled and warmer conditions by the 22nd. Betws-Y-Coed (Conwy) recorded a temperature of 19.4 °C on the 22nd.

23rd to 30th: Low pressure to the west maintained a predominantly westerly or south-westerly airstream over Wales through this period with further showers or periods of rain at times. An interlude of higher pressure on the 25th and 26th gave mainly dry and warmer conditions. Usk (Monmouthshire) recorded a temperature of 19.8 °C on the 26th. A low pressure system moved east into Wales by the 30th giving a cool and showery end to the month with some localised heavy rain and isolated thunderstorms. Milford Haven (Pembrokeshire) recorded 36.6 mm on the 29th.

Scotland diary of highlights

Mean temperatures close to average, but with above average rainfall.

1st to 4th: Rain at first on the 1st, then sunny intervals and showers, these heavy at times. Westerly winds were strong to gale force at times in the south. Patchy rain in the west on the 2nd, but brighter in the east. The 3rd was mainly dry, with the best of the sunshine in the east, with temperatures of 19.1 °C at Fettercairn (Aberdeenshire) and 18.9 °C at Inverbervie (Aberdeenshire). Rain at first on the 4th, then sunny spells and scattered showers, but more rain during the evening.

5th to 17th: Wintry showers for the 5th, these most frequent across the north with snow to low levels during the evening, and strong to gale-force winds. Sunny spells and wintry showers on the 6th and 7th. Strong to gale-force northerly winds gave blizzard conditions over hills, although winds eased inland during the evening. Lerwick (Shetland) recorded a gust of 66 m.p.h. on the 6th. On the 8th, persistent rain affected north-east Scotland, edging south later, with snow on high ground. Brighter in the west with isolated showers. Dyce (Aberdeen Airport) only recorded a maximum temperature of 5.4 °C on the 8th. On the 9th, sleet and snow affected Aberdeenshire, otherwise it was rather cloudy with scattered showers. Rather cloudy on the 10th with rain pushing north-east during the early morning, preceded by snow on high ground. Brighter, showery weather followed from the south-west. The 11th to the 15th saw sunny spells and showers, heavy and thundery at times, with some hill snow. Mainly sunny on the 16th with isolated light showers. The 17th was dry at first but rain in the south later. Loch Glascarnoch (Highlands) recorded a temperature of -4.7 °C on the 16th and Carterhouse (Scottish borders) recorded a temperature of -5.1 °C on the 17th. Eskdalemuir (Dumfries & Galloway) recorded 12 consecutive air frosts between the 6th and 17th.

18th to 23rd: On the 18th, there was patchy rain in the south then scattered showers. There was also some sunshine, but northern areas became cloudier. The 19th was dry, cool and bright. The 20th remained dry in most parts, but patchy light rain reached the south later. The 21st and 22nd were mainly dry with variable cloud. On the 23rd rain in the west moved north-eastwards, with drier and brighter weather following behind

24th to 30th: The north had a mainly dry morning on the 24th with mist patches clearing. Rain in the south-west edged northwards with brighter, showery weather following, and some thunderstorms broke out over southern Scotland. The 25th was mainly dry but rain spread from the south-west during the afternoon, this heavy at times in the west. A wet night in the west Highlands with Lusa (Skye) recording a total of 42.4 mm on the 25th. Rain cleared south on the 26th, with brighter skies following. Temperatures at Rosehearty (Aberdeenshire) and Lossiemouth (Moray) reached 18.5 °C on the 26th. Mostly fine on the 27th with some spells of warm sunshine. However, fog developed in eastern coastal districts in the afternoon with heavy thundery showers moving into the south during the evening. Rain at first on the 28th, then sunny intervals and showers these heavy with hail and thunder at times. More showers heavy and thundery with hail on the 29th. On the 30th a band of rain spread across from the east, followed by showers, some heavy with thunder in the south.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Mean temperatures close to average, with above average sunshine and below average rainfall.

1st to 4th: The 1st had blustery showers, with a gust of 67 m.p.h. reported at Orlock Head (County Down). The 2nd had patchy rain, but with some sunshine in the east later. The 3rd was dry and rather cloudy, with the best of the sunshine in the east. Helens Bay (County Down) and Belfast Newforge recorded a temperature of 18.4 °C on the 3rd. Early rain in the south on the 4th, then drier and cooler with sunny spells.

5th to 16th: Rain cleared south overnight introducing a cold and showery northerly airstream for the 5th, with showers turning increasingly wintry over the hills. Sunny spells and wintry showers on the 6th, but with strong winds easing. Frosty starts between the 7th and 9th, but with showers developing later. More showers on the 10, 11th and 12th, becoming heavy during the afternoons with isolated thunderstorms, but with frost at night. Isolated showers from the 13th to the 16th, although many parts dry with sunny or clear spells. Overnight frosts, with Katesbridge (County Down) recording a temperature of -3.6 °C on the 16th.

17th to 23rd: The 17th had isolated showers, these died out by afternoon, with rain from the east during the evening. Early rain on the 18th, then bright intervals and scattered showers. The 19th was dry, bright and cool. On the 20th, light rain in the south at first, but then dry in the afternoon. Dry and rather cloudy on the 21st. Bright with sunny spells on the 22nd, with rain pushing east during the evening. The 23rd was mainly dry with sunny spells. Ballykelly (County Londonderry) recorded a temperature of 17.2 °C on the 23rd.

24th to 30th: Persistent rain early on the 24th, then sunshine and showers, some heavy and thundery. The 25th was cloudy and damp then drier in the afternoon. Rain returned from the west overnight, exceptionally mild overnight, with Aldergrove recording a night-time (21-09 UTC) minimum temperature of 12 °C. Rain cleared early on the 26th, then bright with some sunshine. The 27th was dry, bright and warm for most parts but some heavy showers moved in from the west during the late afternoon. Peatlands (County Armagh) recorded a temperature of 17.4 °C on the 27th. Sunny intervals and showers on the 28th, 29th and 30th, some thundery. More-organised rain in the east on the 30th.

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